

TX, Tom Osburn, who died on August 6, 2004.

Tom Osburn was a selfless and devoted servant to the community of Sherman. Community leaders remember him as a man who worked constantly for the good of Sherman. If there was a problem, Tom was ready and willing to fix it. Friends recall that he was instrumental in getting a new building for the Texoma Council of Governments when a mold-infestation was discovered in the old building. The Old Settler's Park in Sherman was getting run down, so Tom led an effort to renovate the facility. He also made citizens feel as if they were integral to the success of the community. Rev. Jim Pledger stressed that Tom was a good mentor who encouraged people, through events like Great Days of Service, to give back to Sherman.

Tom and his wife, Jo Ann, arrived in Sherman in 1990. Tom served as TXU's district manager for the Texoma District. The Osburns quickly became an integral part of the community. In addition to serving as Mayor from 1999–2003, he was a member of the city council from 1998–2003. Tom also served on the Board of Directors of the Sherman Chamber of Commerce, the Boy Scouts of America, the American Cancer Society, the United Way, the Texoma Area Paratransit System, the Grayson County Rehabilitation Center, the Sherman Minority Recruitment Scholarship Foundation, and the Grayson County Juvenile Alternatives. Tom further gave his time and energies to the community as chairman of the Administrative Board of the First United Methodist Church, chairman of the Wilson N. Jones Memorial Hospital Foundation, and president of the Sherman Rotary Club. He served as president of the Board of Directors of the Texoma Council of Governments, and it isn't surprising that he was chosen this year as the Texoma Council of Government's Person of the Year for Grayson County.

Tom was a devoted family man. He met his wife, Jo Ann, at New London High School. They both graduated from the University of Texas at Austin after Tom played college basketball at Tyler Junior College, where his team took second place in the nation. Besides Jo Ann, Tom is survived by three children, Chris, Tim, and Beth, five grandchildren, and a sister, Pat Sager of Tyler.

The community of Sherman feels a deep and abiding loss by the death of Tom Osburn. Rarely has an individual made such a lasting and permanent mark on a town and its citizens. On behalf of his many friends and fans, and the community of Sherman, I want to take this opportunity in the House of Representatives to pay our last respects to this honorable man—Tom Osburn.

HONORING J.D. ROGERS

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 15, 2004

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to pay tribute to Mr. J.D. Rogers III, who on September 18, 2004, will be honored during the UAW Local 599 Walter Reuther award ceremony in Flint, MI, for his contributions as the longest serving production committeeman in the history of the local.

J.D. Rogers began his leadership career within UAW local 599 in 1976 when he was elected as alternative committeeman. One month after assuming his post he was elected to fulfill the position of the recently resigned committeeman. His superior leadership skills and support of the union membership granted him several unopposed elections to this post.

J.D. is committed to fulfilling Walter Reuther's mission of helping people, and ensuring human dignity and social justice for all. His hard work and dedication to the duties of his elected position is commendable. His deeds are self evident in the faith the members of 599 have bestowed upon him in allowing him to be re-elected. His service to the UAW extends many years and is highly regarded.

Mr. Speaker, many people have greatly benefited from the leadership and service of Mr. J.D. Rogers. His commitment to the UAW membership is unwavering. I ask my colleagues in the 108th Congress to please join me in congratulating him on obtaining his mark in history and in wishing him the very best in future endeavors.

HONORING HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 15, 2004

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I recognize Hispanic Heritage Month, which begins on September 15, the anniversary of independence for five Latin American countries—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Additionally, Mexico declared its independence on September 16, and Chile on September 18. These are some of the countries that comprise our diverse ethnic group, which have enriched our beautiful Nation.

The 2000 Census found that 35.3 million people identified themselves as Hispanic Americans. This represents a 58-percent increase from the previous Census of 1990. Hispanic Americans continue to thrive and exemplify the American dream. A larger percentage of Hispanic Americans are becoming proud homeowners. Hispanic-owned companies made up 6 percent of the Nation's 20.8 million nonfarm businesses, and earned \$186.3 billion in revenues. Since 1822, 73 Hispanic Americans have served in this very Chamber, in the U.S. House of Representatives.

In March of last year, the Congressional Hispanic Conference, of which I am proud to serve as chair, was inaugurated. We are comprised of a group of Representatives of Hispanic and Portuguese descent, as well as Members who are interested in promoting policies of importance to Americans of Latino descent. The Conference will inform Hispanic Americans that their issues and concerns are being listened to and acted upon in the U.S. Congress. Lower taxes, affordable health care, and the education of our youth are all issues that are imperative to our conservative values. We will be strong advocates to ensure that the largest minority group in the United States has a loud and powerful voice in the Halls of Congress.

Educational advancement and funding continues to be an important issue for all Ameri-

cans, especially Hispanics. Congress has increased funding for Hispanic Serving Institutions by more than 750 percent—from \$10.8 million in 1996 to \$92.4 million in 2003. The Bush administration has also proposed an additional 5-percent increase in funding for minority serving institutions in FY05. This would increase funding for Hispanic Serving Institutions to \$94 million. This vital funding works to advance the educational pursuits of Hispanic Americans across our country.

Congress continues to amend and improve tax policy to the benefit of all Americans. H.R. 839, The Renewing the Dream Tax Credit Act, modifies the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow an income tax credit for the provision of homeownership and community development. This bill would create tax incentives for the construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing for low-income families. The ability to afford and own your own home is a quintessential part of living and pursuing the American dream.

This Congress and our President are committed to ensuring that Hispanic Americans continue to seek economic opportunities and achieve prosperity. The huge increases in educational funding are unprecedented and will continue to serve the needs of the ever-growing Hispanic American community. A stronger, smarter, and fairer tax policy will continue to serve the needs of all Americans. A vibrant, stronger, and more educated Hispanic American population contributes to the greatness of this wonderful nation making us competitive for the new global economy in this technologically advanced society.

INTRODUCTION OF THE VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 2004

HON. JIM SAXTON

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 15, 2004

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Veterans' Employment Act of 2004. Our veterans too often see limitations in the availability of civilian employment opportunities. While federal service positions offer preference to veterans, this provision is not universal in private industry. For many seeking a position in the private sector, the search for employment proves long and arduous.

During their time in the service, our veterans acquire several personal attributes that private employers find imperative in today's business world. While serving in the armed services, these men and women consistently demonstrate a high level of adaptability; the ability to work within a team; a strong work ethic; and, more often than not, exemplary leadership qualities. Alongside the extensive technical and strategic training sustained during their service, the character displayed by our veterans should be sufficient to secure them steady employment. Unfortunately, we have too often been shown that this is not the case.

During my tenure in Congress, many of my constituents have expressed to me their frustration with the availability of steady, well paid employment opportunities. Unlike their non-veteran contemporaries, they often find employers unfamiliar with the extensive training and exemplary personal attributes accumulated during their years of service. With their